Misinformation & Disinformation

What is it?
How can I recognize it?
What skills can help?
What is ‘new denial?’ An alarming wave of climate misinformation is spreading on YouTube, watchdog says

Solar eclipse myths and rumors bubble up, from radiation to food poisoning

Does the COVID-19 vaccine cause cancer?  
Was the COVID-19 vaccine only tested on 8 mice?  
Can the COVID-19 vaccine cause Vaccine-Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (VAIDS)?  
Does Albert Bourla want to “reduce the number of people in the world by 50%”?  

Pizzagate conspiracy theory

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

“Pizzagate” redirects here. For the 2004 pizza-throwing incident, see Battle of the Buffet § "Pizzagate". For the Bill de Blasio controversy, see Bill de Blasio § Pizza controversy.

“SaveTheChildren” redirects here. For the charity, see Save the Children.

“Pizzagate” is a conspiracy theory that went viral during the 2016 United States presidential election cycle, falsely claiming that the New York City Police Department (NYPD) had discovered a pedophilia ring linked to members of the Democratic Party while searching through Anthony Weiner’s emails. It has been extensively discredited by a wide range of organizations, including the Washington, D.C. police.
Why should I care about misinformation?

- Spreads faster than true information
- Impacts the choices that we make
- Makes the internet less reliable
What’s the difference between misinformation & disinformation?

“…Disinformation is false information which is deliberately intended to mislead—intentionally misstating the facts.”

“Misinformation is false or inaccurate information—getting the facts wrong...”

- American Psychological Association
Are you susceptible to misinformation?

Misinformation Susceptibility Test (MIST)

Developed by researchers at: UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
What does misinformation look like?
What does misinformation look like?
What does misinformation look like?

Unusual URLs

- Usatoday.com.co
- Channel16news.com
- Foxbusiness.xyz
- Theredpanther.com

For trustworthy sources, look for:
- .gov
- .edu
- .org

If in doubt, check the page “About”
What does misinformation look like?

- Unusual headlines
- Wild or outrageous claims
- Grammar or all caps

Examples:
- McDonald's to stop serving the Big Mac
- Obama announces plans for a third term presidential run
  Washington, DC — President Barack Obama shocked the country this morning with news that he is running for a third term.
What does misinformation look like?

Parody or Satirical News

- Clickhole
- The Onion: America's Finest News Source
- Reductress
What does misinformation look like?

AI Generated Content

Sports Illustrated found publishing AI generated stories, photos and authors
Discussion Question

What is your experience with encountering these kinds of misinformation?
Skills for Dealing with Misinformation

4 Moves and a Habit

Web Literacy for Student Fact-Checkers

...and other people who care about facts.

Mike Caulfield

Creative Commons Attribution

READ BOOK
1. Check for previous work
2. Go Upstream to the Source

Find what information that source is citing either in text of article or through hyperlinks

Evaluate if source is sponsored content or from a disreputable source

Options for going Upstream:
- Google Search for Terms
- Finding evidence of syndication – publishing of news on one site to another (ex: Associated Press)
- Reverse Image Search
3. Read Laterally
Questionable Information
The Habit

Checking Your Emotions
4 Moves & A Habit in Action

Case Studies from Central Washington University Libraries

Activity:
Select one of the provided examples of misinformation in the next slide and practice the 4 Moves
Fake News Content for Activity

- **Group 1 - Ivermectin:**

- **Group 2 - Great Barrier Reef:**
  https://clintel.org/great-barrier-reef-in-excellent-condition/

- **Group 3 – Francis Scott Key Bridge Explosion:**
  https://archive.ph/4V7oc
Other Resources:

- Web Literacy for Student Factcheckers
- UNHCR Factsheet on Misinformation